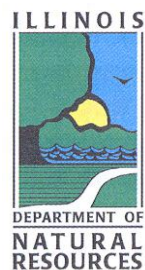


Illinois Interagency Dispatch Center 2008 Year-End Report



**United States Forest Service
US Fish and Wildlife Service
Midewin National Tall Grass Prairie
Illinois Department of Natural Resources
United States National Park Service**



ILLINOIS INTERAGENCY DISPATCH CENTER

The Illinois Interagency Dispatch Center has finally moved into our new location at Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge 8800 State Highway 148, Marion Illinois. The facility, owned by the refuge, is made up of one building where 2/3rds of the building contains administrative offices for the Illinois Interagency Dispatch Center, the Initial Attack Office, Shawnee National Forest Dispatchers, the Shawnee National Forest Fire Management Officer, and Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge engine staff, while the other 1/3 is used for housing Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge fire equipment as well as the Illinois Interagency Wildland Fire Cache.

Even though the completion of the new facility was a long time coming, the construction process was quite unique. This truly was an interagency effort in every way you look at it. Participants in the endeavor were: Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge (Administrative and Maintenance Staff), John A Logan College Construction Management Instructors and Students, Golconda Job Corps Electrical, Painting, and Masonry trade Instructors and Students, and of course the Shawnee National Forests Wildland Fire Crews (both supervisors and crewmembers) and Engineering Staff. Without the hard work and determination of everyone involved, we still may have been in Murphysboro. But we are finally here and I thank everyone who helped.

Besides settling into our new location, the dispatch center had a normal year in some areas and below normal in others. The wildland fire activity was way below the yearly average and the prescribed fire activity down from the previous 2 years. The national resource orders received and mobilization of individuals, crews, engines was about the same as previous years, however we were able to get folks out in capacities which we never had in the past such as Fire Use Manager, Helicopter Manager, Ordering Manager, Resource Unit Leader, Technical Specialists and 3 times this year we were able to fill Archeology requests. Another first was getting 2 individuals trained up and one assigned as an ESF4's (Emergency Support Function) which is a fairly new FEMA position for all risk incidents. We sent out more LEO's (SEC1), Task Force Leaders and Strike Team Leader Engines than in previous years.

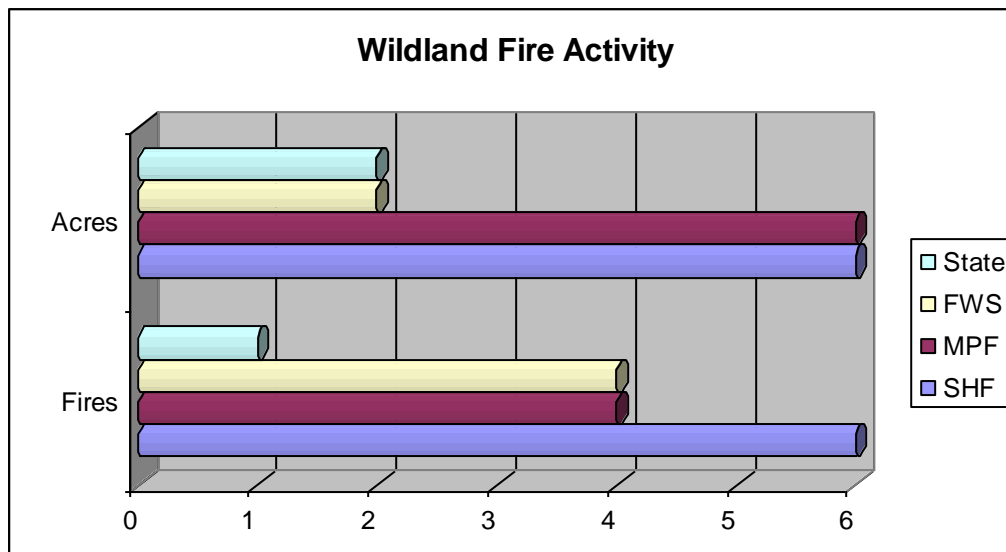
We were also very busy with training (attending, assisting, sponsoring). John took the time to participate as an instructor for the Aircraft Dispatcher (D312) class in the Southern Region as well as participated as an instructor for our Expanded Dispatcher (D310) class which we sponsored here in Southern Illinois supporting about 25 students and instructors. We both participated as dispatch roll players in the S380 class which was sponsored by the Shawnee National Forest and Molly made it through her Supervisory Dispatcher (D510) class which was held in Tucson. 2008 also was Molly's first year as chairman of the Eastern Area Dispatch Working Team which kept her very busy. As chairman she headed up the organization of the semi-annual Dispatch Workshop which was attended by about 60 students and instructors.

Activity

Wildland Fire

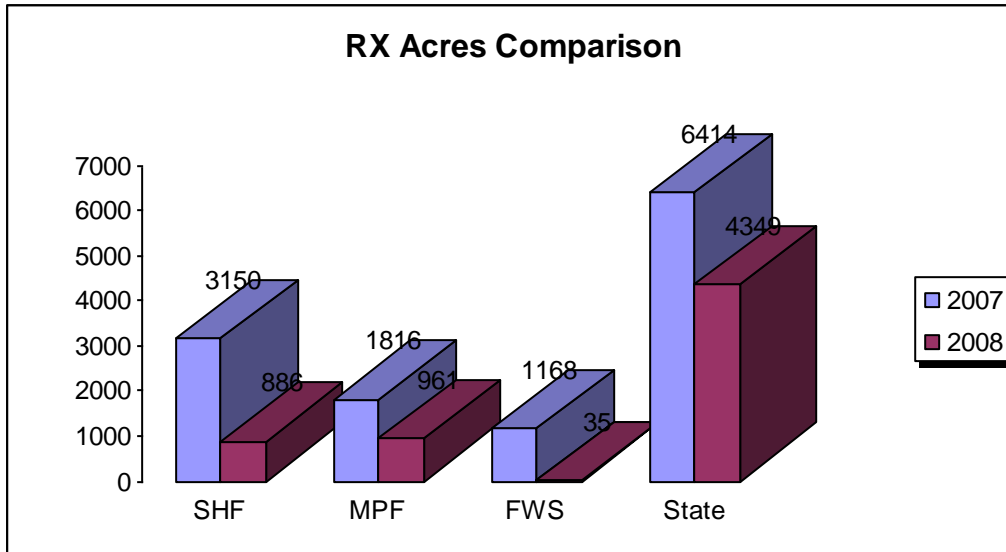
2008 was a very slow year for local fire activity. Due to a very wet spring and fall, local fire and prescribed fire activity was below the norm. Between December of 07 and April of 08 the Hidden Springs Ranger District received 35.6 inches of rain while the Mississippi Bluffs Ranger District received 43.3 inches. So needless to say the spring fire season throughout Shawnee National Forest, and the State for that matter, was short lived.

For the local fire activity, the Shawnee National Forest suppressed 6 fires for 6 acres in 2008, Midewin National Tall Grass Prairie had 4 fires for 6 acres, FWS had 4 fires for 2 acres, while the State reported 1 fires for 2 acres. (acres reported on National Sit Report)



Prescribed Fire

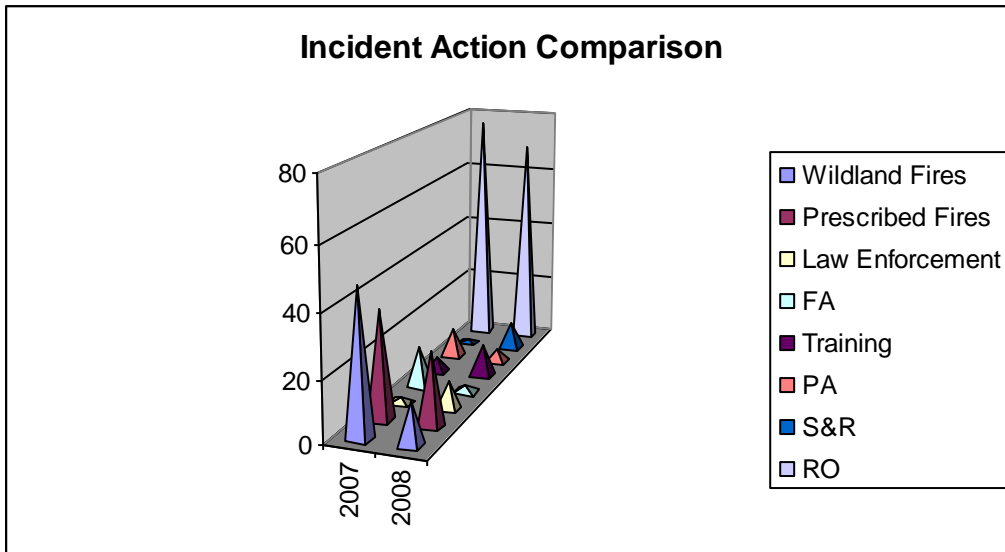
Prescribed fires projects were down in 2008 for all agencies. As shown on the below graph, all agencies were well below the 2007 total acres burned. The weather played a critical role in the prescribed fire activity in Southern Illinois and throughout the state. The State Department of Natural Resources was able to complete 66 burn projects while the Shawnee National Forest completed 7, Midewin National Tall Grass Prairie 8, and the Fish and Wildlife Service had 3.



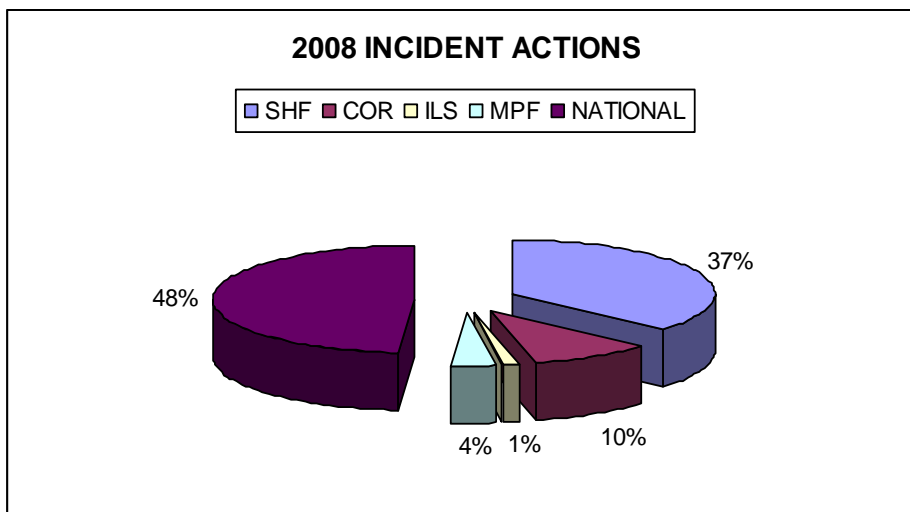
Incident Actions (workload)

In 2008, we processed 142 Incident Actions (down from 189 in 2007) which included wildland fire suppression, prescribed fire support, public assists, law enforcement, search and rescue, training, false alarms, and flight following for the regional bug infestation program. The majority of resource order activity was to California with the dispatch center receiving multiple orders on each incident (reasons for fewer incident actions). Basically we sent more folks to the same incidents. Of those 142 incident action's only 3 were generated for local needs. The dispatch center placed 18 requests with the GACC for filling, and all but one of those were for hotshot crewmembers or the helicopter and crewmembers we brought in to provide a S271 (Helicopter Crewmember) and S219 (Helicopter Transport External Cargo) class.

The Incident Action Comparison graph shows that our biggest workload in 2008 was the mobilization of resource to the various incidents nationally. In 2008 we worked on: 69 National Incidents, 14 Statewide wildland fires (Federal and State), 24 Prescribed Fire projects, 9 Search and Rescue Incidents, responded resources to 13 abandoned campfires (multiple campfires in same location were put on one incident action card), responded resources to 2 False Alarms, 4 county assists, 2 Forest Service Law Enforcement incidents, and 11 miscellaneous items. All in all, except for the fire activity, 2008 was a typical year here in the dispatch center.



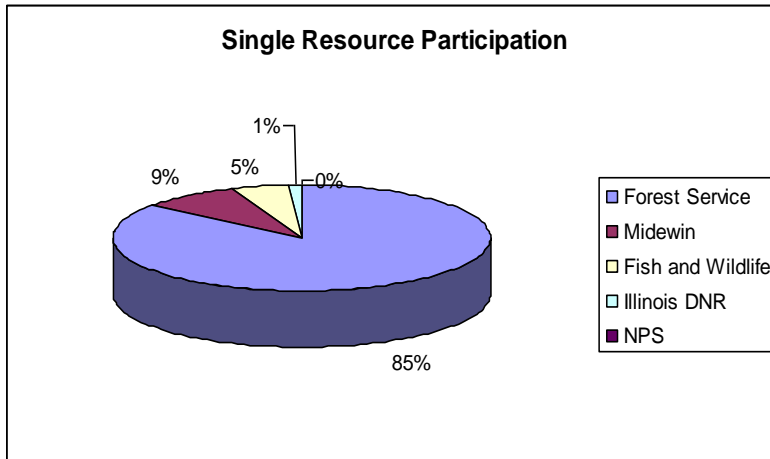
On a local level, the Forest Service activities still generates the majority of our Incident Actions (other than national resource orders), with the Fish and Wildlife Service next. It is no surprise since we provide the initial attack dispatching and communications for the Forest, however compared to last year we have increased participation from Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge.



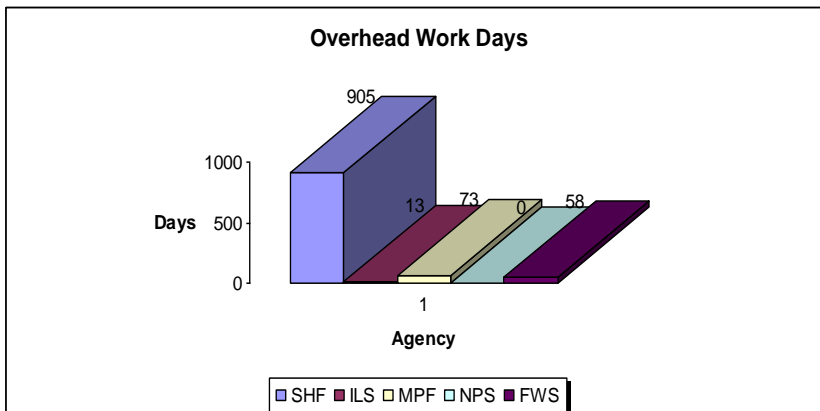
Resource Orders

Overhead

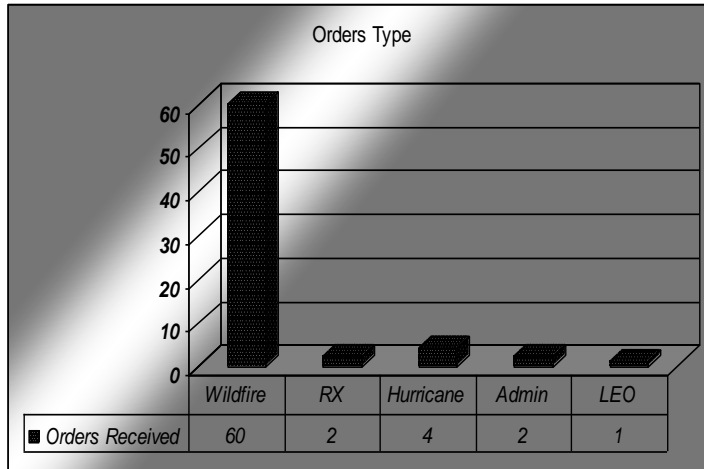
In 2008 we responded resources to 69 national incidents. The Shawnee National Forest provided resource fills on 52 of those incidents sending 70 individuals out on single resource orders while 35 went out on crew/engine orders. The Fish and Wildlife Service sent 7 individuals out this year with 4 going out as single resources and 3 going out as engine crewmembers. Midewin National Tall Grass Prairie sent a total of 146 individuals out, 7 of which were single resource orders with 138 fills for crewmembers on the hotshot crew and SHF Type 2IA crew. The State in 2008, as in 2007, were not able to participate in mobilization activities as State employees, however 3 chose to take vacation and go out on our first hand crew as casual hires and another went out as a single resource.. Lincoln Home National Historic Site resources were available at Planning Level 5; however, we were unable to mobilize them.



Of the 82 individuals sent out as **single resources**, many stayed longer than the traditional 14 day assignments either extending to 21 days or taking R&R in place and then staying another 14. All in all, agency personnel (other than crew and engine) personnel put in a total of 1049 work days (this included single resource casual hires).

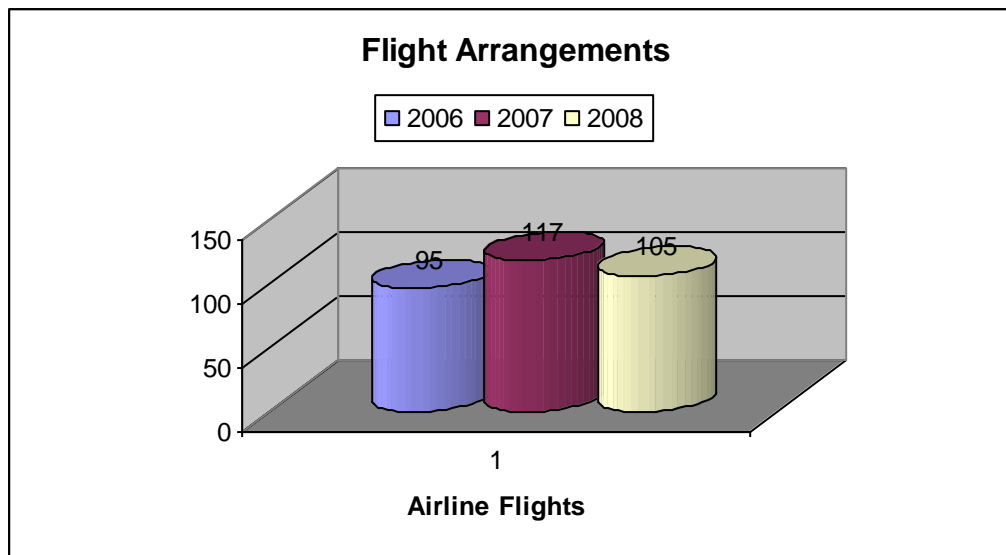


The dispatch center responded 262 individuals (**single resource and crews**) to the various incident types shown below. The majority of resources went to wildland fire activity; however resources assisted in various other all risk/administrative activities on a national level.



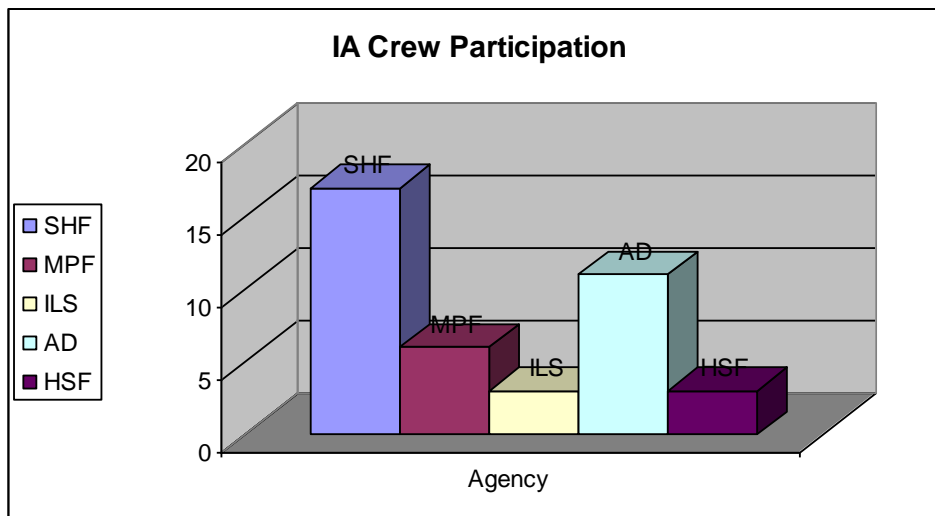
Flight Arrangements

The workload that comes with making flight arrangements for the handcrews and individual resources mobilizing was similar to past years. In 2008 we made 105 various flight arrangements for individuals going to or coming back from incidents. A bit less than the 117 we made in 2007



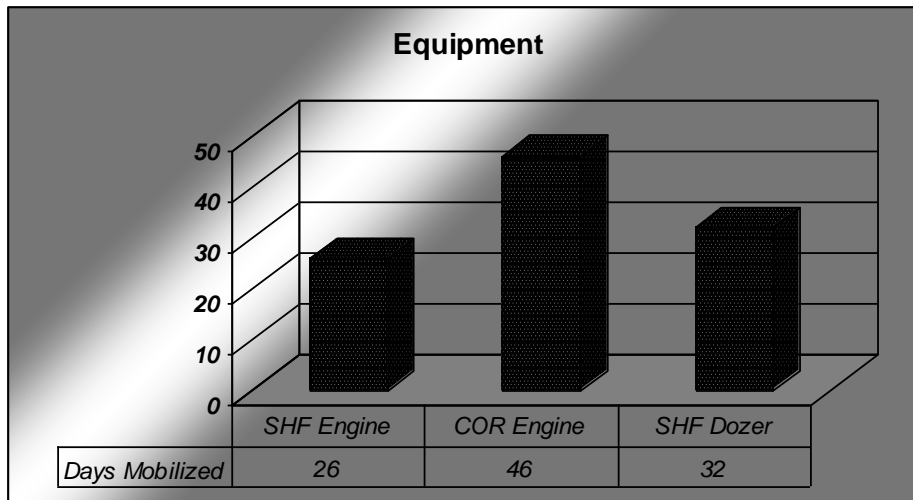
Crew/Equipment

Crews: 2008 was a typical year for crew mobilizations. The Midewin Hotshots went out 8 times and the local Type 2 Interagency crew was mobilized twice. The Midewin Hotshots were without a crew Superintendent the majority of the year; however the Assistant Superintendent filled in and did an excellent job (from the dispatch point of view). ILC placed 10 requests with the Coordination center for crewmembers for the Hotshot crew which is about average. The Illinois Interagency Crew was able to mobilize twice, with a third time being available but received no order. **This was a first time we actually were able to have 3 interagency crews available in one year.** The first deployment was made up of Forest Service, Midewin National Tall Grass Prairie, and State employees. On the second deployment we had to utilize folks from the Hoosier National Forest because our local overhead was already mobilized as single resource.



2008 was also a first for us in utilizing the Job Corps bus for mobilization purposes. We used them twice this year which worked out great. By utilizing their services, we were able to be fiscally responsible in the mobilization of crews. This is a great way to increase the Job Corps participation in national wildland fire mobilization activities.

Equipment: 2008 was a very similar to 2007 for Engine deployments. Typically we send a Forest Engine to the SW on Severity, however most of the National Severity monies were put into California therefore the opportunity to station the engine was not available. The Forest Service was able to mobilize an engine to Michigan with a rotation of engine personnel with a total of 25 days and we had another mobilized to Ohio but they were returned. We also were able to send a dozer up for a 32 day tour. The Fish and Wildlife Service mobilized the Crab Orchard engine to Texas on severity for a total of 46 days, with crew rotations occurring one time.

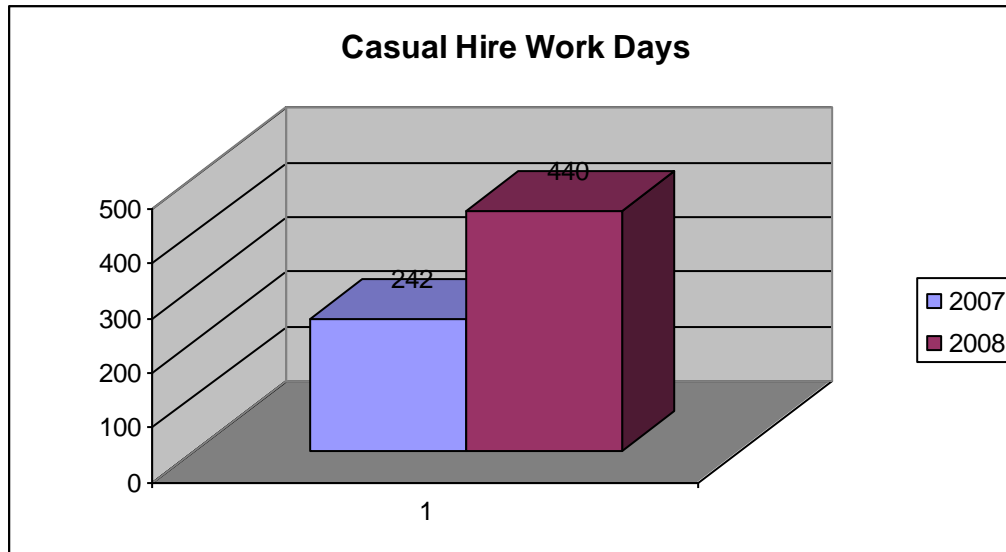


Casual Hires

The casual hire program for the Shawnee National Forest provides the dispatch center with the ability to hire individuals to work on our handcrew or as individual resources during emergency incidents. Many of the individuals who we hire during the summer are our seasonal fire folks. This program provides great opportunity for agency seasonals to gain experience and keep working during the summer when they are typically layed off.

A first for the dispatch center occurred in 2008. With the wildland fire activity in California extreme this year, the State of California was ordered to train up their National Guard units in basic wildland firefighting tactics. The need for instructors was critical so a national call was sent out for instructors and the Illinois Fire Service Institute (IFSI), a program of the University of Illinois, Champagne/Urbana, answered that call. The Illinois Interagency Dispatch Center worked very closely with the IFSI program Supervisors as well as the training personnel at the Wild Fire Training Center in McClellan California to get qualified instructors. ILC hired IFSI personnel as casual hires and then provide all the qualification documentation (IQCS/Redcard), mobilization coordination (ROSS/Flights) as well as payment processing of instructors in order to help in this effort. IFSI was able to provide 7 individuals who went out (some for 2 weeks) to provide the training for the Guard. This was a first time effort to work closely with the institute and we found a good fit. In fact, the Institute will be providing individuals to work with us this summer in filling crew mobilization efforts.

In 2008 the dispatch center had 43 individuals who were signed up as casual hires. We were able to send out 24 individuals either as a single resource or as crewmembers. A few of the casual hires had more than one assignment, depending on their qualifications, but the total days we utilized AD's on incidents was 440 which was a big increase from 2007..



Looking to the Future

Fire Activity: As 2008 showed, the dispatch centers activity varies year to year, as did activity throughout the country. This year we were at the mercy of the weather when it came to meeting prescribed fire goals, as well as wildland fire activity, however in 2009 we will be taking over the Land Between the Lakes and Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuges initial attack dispatching which will most certainly increase activity and workloads.

Resource Orders: I believe that this will increase in 2009. With the budgets the way they are for all agencies, allowing individuals to go out on fire or all risk assignments is a way to cut costs to their budgets therefore we may see more flexibility in agency administrators in allowing their employees to take assignments. The Shawnee National Forest, as well as the other agencies, have been working very hard at getting personnel qualified or trained in various positions therefore allowing for a larger pool of qualified individuals for filling requests.

Radio Traffic: 2009 also will include some changes in how the Shawnee National Forest utilizes our services in daily tracking. The dispatch center will be monitoring and tracking all resources going in and out of the field on a daily basis as well as monitoring the agency Law Enforcement folks while they are out on patrol. We will be gaining a seasonal dispatcher to help with this extra workload.

Casual Hires: The Fire Staff from the Shawnee National Forest, Crab Orchard National Wildlife, and Illinois Department of Natural Resource have been working very hard in developing a working relationship with the local fire departments as well as other agencies such as the Job Corps and the Illinois Fire Service Institute therefore our Casual Hire workload will most definitely increase in 2009.

I do believe with our new location we will see more and more participation with our federal, state, and local cooperators. Once they begin to see our capabilities and become aquatinted with our center we will be utilized more effectively. Also, Because of these efforts, I feel our workloads as dispatch center will increase over the next few years.

Molly A Campbell
Center Manager
Illinois Interagency Dispatch Center